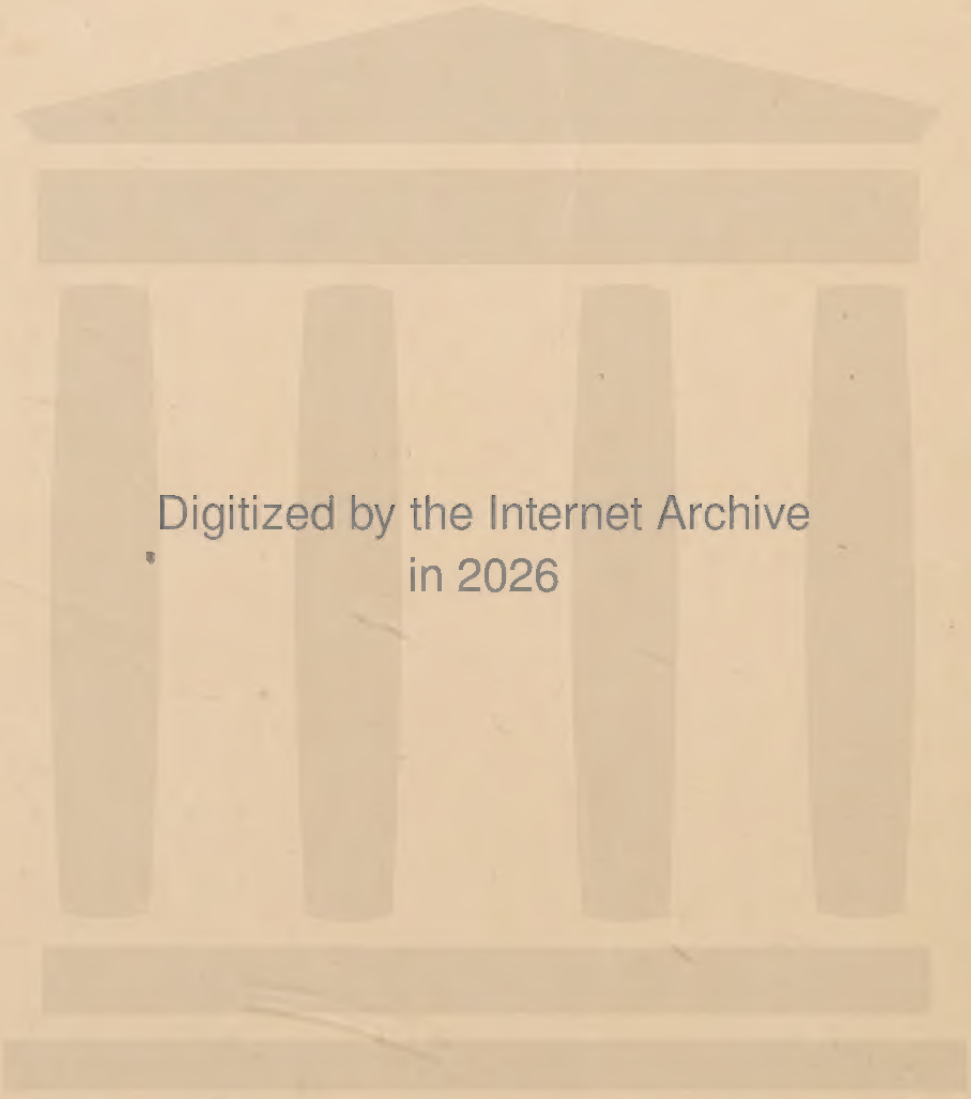
LONGFELLOW'S

MILES

STANDISH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THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

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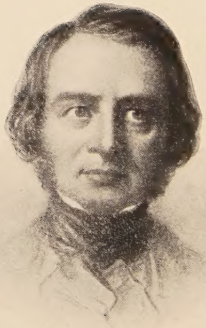

Henry W. Longfellow

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

BY

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

EDITED, WITH NOTES

BY

HOMER P. LEWIS

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INTRODUCTION

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, the foremost of American poets, was born at Portland, Maine, on February 27, 1807. The English ancestor of the family, William Longfellow, came to this country in 1678, and settled at Newbury. His son was the "Village Blacksmith" of the day, and married the daughter of a clergyman in Marshfield. Their son became a schoolmaster, and a clerk of the court. Then followed a judge, whose son, Stephen, was Longfellow's father. He was a lawyer and a United States representative. He married a daughter of General Peleg Wadsworth, who was a prominent officer in the Revolutionary War. Their son, Henry Wadsworth, crowned the line as a poet.

The boy was a bright student and entered Bowdoin College by the time he was fourteen. He was studious and delighted in miscellaneous reading, especially in tales of Indian life, a taste that may have been fostered by the fact that his college was situated in a locality still full of Indian haunts and legends. He had at Bowdoin, in Nathaniel Hawthorne, a classmate whose fame equals his own.

Graduating at the age of eighteen, Longfellow entered his father's office, intending to follow the law, but soon received the offer of a professorship in modern languages in his own college, work for which he was much better fitted. In order to qualify for it more perfectly, he spent the next three years and a half in travelling in France, Italy, Germany, Holland, and England.

Taking up his work at Bowdoin, he remained there six years, marrying in 1831, and in 1833 publishing a small volume of poetry, the fruit of his trip abroad. This was made up mainly of translations from the Spanish and the French, with part of a work called "Outre-Mer," which he completed in the next few years. In 1835 he was chosen professor of modern languages and belles-lettres at Harvard, and paid another visit to Europe for further preparation.

Returning after fifteen months of travel, he became a resident of Cambridge, Massachusetts. His next volume of poetry, "The Voices of the Night," in which appeared, among others, the famous "Psalm of Life," had an immense popularity. This was followed by "Ballads and other Poems," containing "The Wreck of the Hesperus," "Excelsior," "The Village Blacksmith," and others. Soon after came his "Poems on Slavery," followed in a year or two by two thin volumes, in which were included such favorites as "The Day is Done," "The Belfry of Bruges," and "The Old Clock on the Stairs."

About 1843 he fixed his residence in the Craigie House at Cambridge, celebrated for having been the headquarters of Washington when he took command of the Army of the United States in 1776. Here he continued to reside until his death. In 1847 he published "Evangeline," the greatest of his works, the story of which was drawn from a pathetic incident which occurred during the expulsion of the French from Nova Scotia by the British.

In 1849 Longfellow published "The Seaside and the Fireside," following it soon after with the "Golden Legend," which is considered, next to "Evangeline," his greatest work. In 1854 he resigned his college-work, but did not cease to write. "Hiawatha," his noted Indian story, appeared in 1855, and "The Courtship of Miles Standish" three years later. This latter poem it was particularly fitting for Longfellow to write, as his mother was a descendant of "Priscilla, the Puritan Maiden," and the poem is founded upon a pleasing incident which was doubtless a well known tradition in his family history.

In 1867 he brought out his scholarly translation of the "Divina Commedia" of Dante.

In 1880 his health showed signs of failing, and two years later he died, amid universal regret.

THE PILGRIMS

The Pilgrims belonged to those people in England who, very soon after the Reformation, wished still further to simplify and purify the ritual of the Church of England. From this fact they were called Puritans. They claimed not to differ from the Church in their creed but only in the observances by which the creed was expressed. After a time, however, even this difference began to draw upon them persecution. They hoped that they would be permitted to withdraw from the Church and hold services of their own, and succeeded in organizing two congregations in the northern part of England where the counties of Lincoln, Nottingham, and York come together. But by orders of the government, these gatherings were constantly interrupted and scattered and the leaders imprisoned.

Discouraged by this harsh treatment, they began to think of leaving the country, and turned their eyes toward Holland. To be sure, America had been discovered a full century before this, but as yet no permanent English settlement was made there. Moreover, the Spaniards, who were the deadly enemies of the English on account of religion and for other reasons, held the southern part of it, the only part then thought to be at all desirable or even possible for

settlement. The rest of it was supposed to be not only bleak and uninhabitable for Europeans, but teeming with hostile tribes of savages. Besides, the perils of crossing so tremendous a sea as the Atlantic appalled the ordinary citizen. But Holland was close by, and thus it was to Holland they looked for refuge.

The reformed religion had been introduced into Holland in 1573, and since that time the utmost religious freedom was permitted. Every sect was tolerated, and an asylum was opened there for fugitives from persecution of all sorts. Amsterdam, then one of the greatest cities of Europe, was called "a common harbor of all opinions, of all heresies." Books and pamphlets could be printed in Amsterdam which were not allowed in England or elsewhere. Men pursued for any reason by the governments of their own countries could live in peace in Holland. Accordingly, these persecuted Puritans decided to flee to Holland.

They tried to keep their design very secret, for they knew that if the government heard of it, they would not be allowed to go. It was a difficult position in which they found themselves. King James I, who was then on the throne, declared he would "make them conform or he would harry them out of the land." Yet if they tried to go out of the land, his government did everything in its power to prevent them. Their first attempt to get away in 1607, was discovered and frustrated. Nevertheless, in

the next year or two, they managed to slip away and gather in Amsterdam, where they proceeded to organize a church. However, things proved unsatisfactory there, and at the end of a year they moved again, this time to Leyden, which was not far away. Here they settled down and remained twelve years, winning golden opinions from the Dutch government for their industry and their peaceful lives.

These English Puritans were mainly of the respectable middle class, farmers and handicraftsmen. Leyden was a great woollen-manufacturing centre, and in the course of their stay there, they all became more or less expert in the different branches of that trade, that is, in spinning, weaving, carding, etc. Also in carpentering, rope-making, and many other kinds of work that is done with the hands. Here, too, they were joined by fugitive Protestants from France, called Huguenots. These people were famous for their ability in silk-weaving. Dutch weavers also became part of their company. It was probably owing in large part to their skill in these trades that they were enabled to found later a successful colony in America. To open a new country you must have workers, people who know how to do things.

After a time it became evident to the leaders among these Puritans that their little band would have to move again. They saw that it was hard for their people to make a living in Holland, and moreover, they

were in danger of losing their nationality. They could foresee that when their children grew up, they would very likely marry among the Dutch, probably learn to speak the Dutch language and drop their own, and in time be wholly absorbed into the Dutch nation. Then, too, in religious matters, outside habits and customs, with regard to the observance of the Sabbath, for instance, were sure to creep in. So if they wished to preserve both their religion and their nationality, although the Dutch were the best people they could settle among for the purpose, still it would be better to settle in a country without other inhabitants.

Moreover, they had been hearing better things of America. In the very year of their escape to Holland, the first permanent English colony had been settled at Jamestown, Virginia. And while they did not wish to get very near this colony on account of their religion, still if they went to America now, it would be a comfort to know that they were not the only English people living on that side of the world. Then, too, Henry Hudson had made his famous voyage up the Hudson River and had brought back a glowing account of it. And they began to think that they might settle there, and if they did, it would be far enough away from Jamestown to suit their purpose.

So they sent some agents to King James, asking if he would let them go to America and settle on the land he claimed to own there. They told him that they

wished to remain loyal Englishmen, and hinted that in time their trade might become valuable to him. The king, of course, would have nothing to say officially to heretics, but inasmuch as he could no longer have the pleasure of harrying these particular heretics in his own dominions, they were given to understand privately that they might go. And they began with mingled joy and sorrow to make their preparations for departure.

In England they had been called Separatists, a name against which they protested, saying that they had not separated in the least from what the Church of England believed, but only from the ceremonies which it practised. But as their great objection to it was that it was a national church which everybody had to support, and as they were really trying to separate the Church from the State, they were obliged in the end to submit to bear the name of Separatists. But they said that since they had removed from England to Amsterdam to be free to practise their own religion, and from Amsterdam to Leyden, and were now again about to leave Leyden for America, they looked upon their wanderings as a pilgrimage and themselves as pilgrims, and thus they would call themselves.

They hired a small ship in Holland named the *Speedwell*, to convey as many of them as it could accommodate to America and remain there with them a

year to assist in the coasting trade with the Indians. Another, the *Mayflower*, was chartered in London, and the two ships were to meet at Southampton and proceed from there together. But the *Speedwell* proved unseaworthy, and they had to put back. Finally all of her passengers who could be accommodated were taken aboard the *Mayflower*, which then sailed alone from the English harbor of Plymouth, September 16, 1620.

After a slow and wearisome voyage, the *Mayflower* reached Cape Cod. As they intended to settle about Hudson River, they sailed south from here, but finding themselves among dangerous shoals, they turned back and dropped anchor in what is now known as Provincetown Harbor, on November 21.

Before going ashore, they drew up the famous "Compact," "combining ourselves together into a civil body politic," and immediately chose Mr. John Carver as governor. The next day was Sunday, which they observed on board the vessel. Monday morning the women went ashore to wash and the men to explore. The first day or two these explorers saw no Indians, but found some buried corn which they dug up and took away, intending to pay the owners for it as soon as they found out to whom it belonged. A few days later, as they were exploring further down the coast, they were suddenly attacked by Indians, whom they easily beat off. Probably these were the owners of

the corn, who, finding it gone, and not knowing that the Pilgrims intended to pay for it, looked upon them as marauders, and so attacked them. During the following winter the Pilgrims did discover to whom the corn belonged, and paid for it.

They continued their explorations around Cape Cod, and finally entered Plymouth Bay and made a landing. This was the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, December 21, 1620, and the rock on which they stepped ashore is still to be seen at Plymouth. Having brought the *Mayflower* around, they immediately set to work building their small town, erecting first a common house for the accommodation of all until separate houses could be built for the different families. They called the place Plymouth, partly because it had already been called so by Captain John Smith of the Virginia colony who had explored this coast, and partly because Plymouth was the last English town which befriended them.

They occasionally saw Indians at a distance, but were quite unmolested for over a year. The reason for this they found out later. It seems that three or four years before the coming of the Pilgrims, a plague had carried off the whole of the tribe which owned the land about Plymouth, with the exception of one man. So there were none left to feel that the white men were taking their land from them. On March 26, 1621, a friendly Indian named Samoset came into the settle-

ment, who could speak a few words of English which he had picked up from English sailors fishing at Monhegan, off the Maine coast. In a few days he brought another Indian. By means of these two, the Pilgrims established friendly relations with the great chief Massasoit. They were very anxious to do this because they lost fully half their number a few months after landing.

One hundred Pilgrims set sail from Plymouth in England. One died on the way across the ocean, and one was born. Fifty died the first winter, which was for them a terrible one, on account of the privation and suffering they endured, although the season was a mild one for New England. But weakened as they were, and half starving, not one offered to return in the *Mayflower*, which set out on her voyage back April 15, 1621.

In the November following, came the ship *Barbara* from England with more people and more supplies. In August, 1623, the *Anne* and the *Little James* arrived, the latter sent out to stay with the colony. All coming in these ships are counted in with those who came in the *Mayflower*, and are called the Pilgrim Forefathers.[1]

[1] For a fuller account, see Young's "Chronicles of the Pilgrims."

THE POEM

"The Courtship of Miles Standish," if intelligently studied, gives a very good picture of the conditions under which the settlement of Plymouth was begun, and furthermore a very good portrayal of the character of the Pilgrim Fathers. But to get this clearly in mind, it is necessary that every reference, especially those to the Bible, should be followed up.

After the Reformation was established in England and the Puritans began to multiply, they took the Bible as the source of their information as to what they ought to do and what customs they ought to observe. The Old Testament was read as it had never been read before. They likened themselves and their troubles and their deeds to personages and events of the Bible, and phrases and expressions from it were used in daily speech.

Longfellow has perfectly presented this characteristic of these particular Puritans, called Pilgrims. The poem is full of Biblical references, and as every pupil has easy access to a Bible, there can be no better time for giving him some acquaintance with a book without knowledge of which literature in general cannot be understood. The Pilgrims took the Bible to Plymouth with them, intending to draw from it all measures of government and conduct. So it

appears in the poem, even among the few books of Miles Standish, who was not originally a member of their church. It appears also on the table at the council, when they are discussing the war challenge of the Indians.

In "The Courtship of Miles Standish," Longfellow has not presented the historical facts and events exactly as they occurred. He has used with them what we call poetic license — that is, he has brought them in where they best suited the story, whether they took place in just that order or not. If he were writing history, we should not be willing to have this done. But in poetry it is permitted. The action of the tale is supposed to take place during the first year of the settlement, but in reality the events which are related occupied the first four years. For instance, the expedition against the Indians on which Miles Standish marched away was not undertaken until the third year. So, too, the converting of their first fort into a church with cannon mounted on its roof was not accomplished until later.

The chief actors in this little love story are Miles Standish, John Alden, and Priscilla Mullins.

In 1584 Queen Elizabeth took the part of the United Provinces (as Holland was then called), which were contending for their independence against Spain. She made a league with them, and sent them men and money. From that time on, there were always

English soldiers fighting in the Dutch armies until Holland was free. Among these soldiers was Captain Miles Standish. He was originally from Lancashire, England, where his family had established two homes, Standish Hall and Duxbury Park, owing to religious differences in which one branch became Protestant while the other remained Catholic. Miles Standish was presumed to be of the Protestant branch of Duxbury Park from the fact of his throwing in his lot with the Pilgrims, and later naming his estate in the New World, Duxbury. He was thought to be heir to certain family properties of which he had been deprived, and hence to be seeking his fortune in the war in Holland. While there, he fell in with the Pilgrims, and having taken a great liking to them, resolved to join them when they decided to sail for America. Although he was not of their church, they welcomed him to their ranks, for they felt that they would very much need a man of his sort in their new settlement. He went in the *Mayflower*, accompanied by his wife Rose, who died in those first terrible months. He had probably reached middle-age.

John Alden was among those from England who joined the Holland Pilgrims at Southampton, and was said to be a cooper. He was a much younger man. Longfellow calls him a "stripling," and in the poem (line 20) he is said to be the youngest man who came in the *Mayflower*. He was very different from Miles

Standish, being a student, while the other was a soldier.

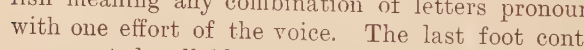
There is reason to think that Priscilla Mullins was of Huguenot extraction, her people probably being refugees in England after the Massacre of St. Bartholomew in 1572. The name was perhaps anglicized from Molines, or possibly Moulins. Lines 269 to 275 imply that she was familiar with English life and scenery, but she does not speak of Holland. Hence it is clear that Longfellow does not place her among the Leyden Pilgrims. He hints that there was an acquaintance between her and John Alden before they sailed from England, and that John Alden followed her over the ocean, whither she was accompanied by her father, mother, and brother. This is not likely, as in that case the attachment between them would have been so apparent to the people about them that Miles Standish would never have thought of wooing her. John Alden formed a close friendship with Miles Standish on the voyage over, but it is more than likely that the feeling of both men for Priscilla was kindled after the founding of Plymouth. The poet has utilized the little that is known about her to describe her with such tender grace that she has served ever since as the ideal of New England maidenhood.

Like "Evangeline," the greatest of Longfellow's poems, "The Courtship of Miles Standish" is written in dactylic hexameter — the same metre in which are

written the great poems of the world, the "Iliad" and the "Odyssey" of Homer, and the "Æneid" of Vergil. The line is divided into six feet, and each foot, except the last, contains one accented syllable followed by two unaccented ones — a syllable in English meaning any combination of letters pronounced with one effort of the voice. The last foot contains an accented syllable followed by an unaccented one. Such a line is marked in this way: —

each of these divisions being a foot and the accent falling always upon the first syllable of the foot.

The following line 13 from the poem is an example of a perfect line of this sort: —



In scanning such a line, that is, in reading it metrically or according to the metre, it is plain that in words of more than one syllable the accent must fall upon the syllable on which it would properly fall in prose. If it happens otherwise, it is evident that the scanning is incorrect. But in every poem of this kind, the two unaccented syllables may be replaced by a syllable having almost the same stress of the voice as the accented one. If this were not allowed, such a poem

would be very monotonous. But this substitution, occurring now in one foot and now in another, gives an agreeable variety. As in the following: —

Yon-der | there on the | hill by the | sea lies | bur-ied Rose | Stan-dish, |
Beau-ti-ful | Rose of | love that | bloomed for | me by the | way-side. |

Scanning is intended to help one to appreciate the melody and rhythm of a poem. It has another practical use, however. Through the accent in scanning, one is often helped in the pronunciation of a difficult word. For instance, in line 9 occurs the word "Arabic," which is often mispronounced. By scanning the line thus: —

Curved at the | point and in- | -scribed with its | mys-ti-cal | Ar-a-bic | sen-tence,

the correct pronunciation is easily seen.

A like service is rendered in the case of the last word of line 28, which is an unfamiliar one. By scanning the line: —

Fired point- | -blank at my | heart by a | Span-ish | ar-ca- bu- | -ce-ro, |

one sees at once how to pronounce it.

The pupil should not be allowed to pass over any word of even doubtful meaning without looking it up in the dictionary. All such words have been purposely omitted from the notes in order to give the pupil this practice with the dictionary. He should gain the power to select readily, from several definitions of a word, the particular one required by the text. For instance, in line 303 occurs the word "yard." It has three definitions: a measure, a plot of ground which is enclosed, and a part of a vessel. It is important that he should gain some ease in telling quickly which one the sense demands.

If the pupil has gone far enough in his study of rhetoric to distinguish figures, he will find this poem, "The Courtship of Miles Standish," a very good one in which to apply his knowledge. But the main emphasis can be, it seems to me, most profitably laid upon his work with the Bible and the dictionary. When he has finished the poem, he ought to have a very fair knowledge of how to use both these books, even if he has had no previous practice of the kind.

THE
COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

THE COURTSHIP OF MILES STANDISH

I

MILES STANDISH

In the Old Colony days, in Plymouth the land of the Pilgrims,
To and fro in a room of his simple and primitive dwelling,

[1] Old Colony: this name was applied to Plymouth after the settlements were made about Massachusetts Bay in 1628, 1630.

Pilgrims: look up Hebrews xi. 13. See also the sketch in the preface.

[2] The Pilgrims built seven dwelling-houses that first winter besides three or four houses for the use of the plantation and a platform on a small bluff, on which they mounted five guns. The houses were arranged along a short thoroughfare near the water, called Leyden St., from the city in Holland where they had lived. They were really log-cabins made of tree-trunks rough-hewn from the forest, with the cracks filled in with mud or mortar. The roofs were of thatch. Thatch roofs are common in England, where they are made of wheat or rye straw. But the Pilgrims, having no such thing, were obliged to use dry grass or rushes.

It was impossible to bring very much household furniture with them in the ship. Much was fashioned more or less skilfully after their landing. The Plymouth Museum contains an interesting collection of their cooking-utensils, a few chairs, desk, cradle, etc.

Clad in doublet and hose, and boots of Cordovan leather,
Strode, with a martial air, Miles Standish the Puritan Captain.
Buried in thought he seemed, with his hands behind him, and pausing
Ever and anon to behold his glittering weapons of warfare,
Hanging in shining array along the walls of the chamber, —
Cutlass and corselet of steel, and his trusty sword of Damascus,
Curved at the point and inscribed with its mystical Arabic sentence,

[3] Cordovan: locate Cordova. Cordovan leather was a famous preparation of goat skin.

[4] Miles Standish: see the sketch of the poem in the preface.

[5] Damascus: locate it. The Saracens were skilful workers of the metals, and the blades manufactured at Damascus were particularly fine. The steel was often given a watered appearance and swords were engraved with some sacred word or phrase, like the word "Kismet," meaning fate. To show the finely tempered edge of these Arabic weapons, the story is told in Scott's "Talisman" of the Saladin having a trial of skill with Richard Cœur de Lion of England. The Saladin tossed a down cushion into the air, and as it fell, neatly sliced it in two with his curved blade.

Both the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Pilgrim Society of Plymouth claim to have the sword of Miles Standish. It is quite possible that he had more than one.

While underneath, in a corner, were fowling-piece, musket, and matchlock.
Short of stature he was, but strongly built and athletic,
Broad in the shoulders, deep-chested, with muscles and sinews of iron;
Brown as a nut was his face, but his russet beard was already
Flaked with patches of snow, as hedges sometimes in November.
Near him was seated John Alden, his friend and household companion,
Writing with diligent speed at a table of pine by the window;
Fair-haired, azure-eyed, with delicate Saxon complexion,
Having the dew of his youth, and the beauty thereof, as the captives
Whom Saint Gregory saw, and exclaimed, "Not Angles but Angels."

15 John Alden: see the sketch of the poem in the preface.

18 Dew of his youth: give the meaning of this expression in your own language.

19 Saint Gregory: a Roman monk of the Benedictine order who afterwards became one of the greatest of the Popes. It was while a monk that he saw in the slave market at Rome some English captives. A Teutonic tribe called Angles had overrun Britain and

Youngest of all was he of the men who came in the Mayflower.

Suddenly breaking the silence, the diligent scribe interrupting,
Spake, in the pride of his heart, Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth.
"Look at these arms," he said, "the warlike weapons that hang here
Burnished and bright and clean, as if for parade or inspection!
This is the sword of Damascus I fought with in Flanders; this breastplate,
Well I remember the day! once saved my life in a skirmish;
Here in front you can see the very dint of the bullet

the Romans called the inhabitants of the island by their name. So fair were the faces of the captives that the good monk exclaimed, "Non Angli sed Angeli," that is, "not Angles but angels." When Saint Gregory became Pope, he sent Saint Augustine over to England to convert them to Christianity.

[21] Scribe: from the Latin word which means *to write*. It is used constantly in the Bible to mean the people whose profession it was to copy out the Scriptures, as there was no printing in those days. The Jews got all their laws from the Scriptures, and hence the scribes were their lawyers. Look up Luke v. 17. With whom are they often associated in the New Testament? To whom does the word refer here? Why?

Fired point-blank at my heart by a Spanish arcabucero.
Had it not been of sheer steel, the forgotten bones of Miles Standish
Would at this moment be mould, in their grave in the Flemish morasses."
Thereupon answered John Alden, but looked not up from his writing:
"Truly the breath of the Lord hath slackened the speed of the bullet;
He in his mercy preserved you, to be our shield and our weapon!"
Still the Captain continued, unheeding the words of the stripling:
"See, how bright they are burnished, as if in an arsenal hanging;
That is because I have done it myself, and not left it to others.
Serve yourself, would you be well served, is an excellent adage;
So I take care of my arms, as you of your pens and your inkhorn.

28 Arcabucero: formerly a Spanish archer, now a Spanish soldier who shoots, with any sort of weapon.

32, 33 This is an instance of how the Pilgrims made use of phrases from the Bible in ordinary speech.

Then, too, there are my soldiers, my great, invincible army,
Twelve men, all equipped, having each his rest and his matchlock,
Eighteen shillings a month, together with diet and pillage,
And, like Cæsar, I know the name of each of my soldiers!"
This he said with a smile, that danced in his eyes, as the sunbeams
Dance on the waves of the sea, and vanish again in a moment.
Alden laughed as he wrote, and still the Captain continued:

[39] Army: this little military company, which is doubtless the beginning of the militia system in America, was made up by the settlers the first year through fear that the Indians would be more than likely to attack them if they came to know how many of their number had died. To Miles Standish, after wars he had seen waged in Holland, this little band of twelve men seemed ludicrous. Yet it was enough with him at its head to preserve the colony until it grew stronger. A few men with guns are a match for a much larger number armed only with such weapons as those of the Indians.

[41] Pillage: what would a soldier get by pillage? How much are eighteen shillings in American money? Find out if you can how much soldiers are paid to-day.

[42] Cæsar was immensely popular with his army partly for this reason.

"Look! you can see from this window my brazen howitzer planted
High on the roof of the church,[47] a preacher who speaks to the purpose,
Steady, straightforward, and strong, with irresistible logic,
Orthodox, flashing conviction right into the hearts of the heathen.
Now we are ready, I think, for any assault of the Indians:
Let them come, if they like, and the sooner they try it the better, —
Let them come if they like, be it sagamore, sachem, or pow-wow,
Aspinet, Samoset, Corbitant, Squanto, or Tokamahamon[53]!"

Long at the window he stood, and wistfully gazed on the landscape,

[47] Here the poet is using poetic license with the facts. The church was not built until a year or two later.

[52] Give these names in the order of their rank. Why does not the poet arrange them so in his line? What two meanings for pow-wow?

[53] These are real names of Indians whom the Pilgrims knew. Learn their proper pronunciation by scanning the line.

Washed with a cold gray mist, the vapory breath of the east-wind,
Forest and meadow and hill, and the steel-blue rim of the ocean,
Lying silent and sad, in the afternoon shadows and sunshine.
Over his countenance flitted a shadow like those on the landscape,
Gloom intermingled with light; and his voice was subdued with emotion,
Tenderness, pity, regret, as after a pause he proceeded:
"Yonder there, on the hill by the sea, lies buried Rose Standish;
Beautiful rose of love, that bloomed for me by the wayside!
She was the first to die of all who came in the Mayflower!
Green above her is growing the field of wheat we have sown there,

63 *Mayflower:* what was the name of the other ship which started with the *Mayflower?* The *Mayflower* carried the colonists who settled Salem and those who settled what is now Boston. Thus this ship is closely associated with the beginnings of New England.

64 Those who died the first winter were buried on a low bluff near the shore and the graves smoothed flat. As soon as the season

Better to hide from the Indian scouts the graves of our people,
Lest they should count them and see how many already have perished!"
Sadly his face he averted, and strode up and down, and was thoughtful.

Fixed to the opposite wall was a shelf of books, and among them
Prominent three, distinguished alike for bulk and for binding;
Bariffe's Artillery Guide, and the Commentaries of Cæsar,
Out of the Latin translated by Arthur Goldinge of London,
And, as if guarded by these, between them was standing the Bible.
Musing a moment before them, Miles Standish paused, as if doubtful
Which of the three he should choose for his consolation and comfort,

permitted, this place was sown with wheat to prevent the Indians from learning how weak the colony was growing by counting the graves.

70 Commentaries of Cæsar: what was the subject of these Commentaries?

71 Arthur Goldinge: the translator of many classical works.

Whether the wars of the Hebrews, the famous campaigns of the Romans,
Or the Artillery practice, designed for belligerent Christians.
Finally down from its shelf he dragged the ponderous Roman,
Seated himself at the window, and opened the book, and in silence
Turned o'er the well-worn leaves, where thumb-marks thick on the margin,
Like the trample of feet, proclaimed the battle was hottest.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,
Busily writing epistles important, to go by the Mayflower,
Ready to sail on the morrow, or next day at latest, God willing!
Homeward bound with the tidings of all that terrible winter,

75 In what period of their history occurred "the wars of the Hebrews"?

79, 80 Explain the meaning of these lines.

88 The *Mayflower* sailed on her return voyage April 15, 1621. How old was the colony then?

84 Terrible winter: terrible from the bereavements and priva-

Letters written by Alden, and full of the name of Priscilla,
Full of the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla!

II

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP

Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling,
Or an occasional sigh from the laboring heart of the Captain,
Reading the marvellous words and achievements of Julius Cæsar.
After a while he exclaimed, as he smote with his hand, palm downwards,
Heavily on the page: "A wonderful man was this Cæsar!
You are a writer, and I am a fighter, but here is a fellow

tions they suffered in trying to make a home in an unsettled country. But the season itself was a mild one for New England.

85 Priscilla: see the sketch of the poem in the preface.

89 Bring into class a sketch of Julius Cæsar.

Who could both write and fight, and in both was equally skilful!"
Straightway answered and spake John Alden, the comely, the youthful:
"Yes, he was equally skilled, as you say, with his pen and his weapons.
Somewhere have I read, but where I forget, he could dictate
Seven letters at once, at the same time writing his memoirs."
"Truly," continued the Captain, not heeding or hearing the other,
"Truly a wonderful man was Caius Julius Cæsar!
Better be first, he said, in a little Iberian village,
Than be second in Rome, and I think he was right when he said it.
Twice was he married before he was twenty, and many times after;
Battles five hundred he fought, and a thousand cities he conquered;

[100] It is told of Cæsar that as he was once marching through a wretched little village of barbarians and there arose some mocking comment among his companions about there being no canvassing for office there, he remarked that for his part he would rather be first there than second even in Rome. Standish evidently agrees with him. What do you think of the sentiment?

He, too, fought in Flanders, as he himself has recorded;
Finally he was stabbed by his friend, the orator Brutus!
Now, do you know what he did on a certain occasion in Flanders,
When the rear-guard of his army retreated, the front giving way too,
And the immortal Twelfth Legion was crowded so closely together
There was no room for their swords? Why, he seized a shield from a soldier,
Put himself straight at the head of his troops, and commanded the captains,
Calling on each by his name, to order forward the ensigns;

104 Can you give the name of a famous man connected with the Virginia colony who also fought in Flanders?

Flanders: a county of the Low Countries or the Netherlands (now Holland and Belgium) where war was waged with Spain. The seven counties which continued the war until they gained their independence made up the modern Holland.

106 Flanders: in the time of Cæsar, Flanders and the rest of what is now Belgium were not divided from France, and the Romans called the whole country Gaul. This part of it was occupied by the Belgi whom Cæsar considers "the bravest of all the Gauls."

108 Legion: a division of the Roman army consisting of about five thousand men. The Twelfth Legion was Cæsar's favorite.

111 What would be the effect of this order when executed?

Then to widen the ranks, and give more room for their weapons;
So he won the day, the battle of something-or-other.
That's what I always say; if you wish a thing to be well done,
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"

All was silent again; the Captain continued his reading.
Nothing was heard in the room but the hurrying pen of the stripling
Writing epistles important to go next day by the Mayflower,
Filled with the name and the fame of the Puritan maiden Priscilla;
Every sentence began or closed with the name of Priscilla,
Till the treacherous pen, to which he confided the secret,
Strove to betray it by singing and shouting the name of Priscilla!
Finally closing his book, with a bang of the ponderous cover,
Sudden and loud as the sound of a soldier grounding his musket,

Thus to the young man spake Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth:
"When you have finished your work, I have something important to tell you.
Be not however in haste; I can wait; I shall not be impatient!"
Straightway Alden replied, as he folded the last of his letters,
Pushing his papers aside, and giving respectful attention:
"Speak; for whenever you speak, I am always ready to listen,
Always ready to hear whatever pertains to Miles Standish."
Thereupon answered the Captain, embarrassed, and culling his phrases:
"'Tis not good for a man to be alone, say the Scriptures.
This I have said before, and again and again I repeat it;
Every hour in the day, I think it, and feel it, and say it.
Since Rose Standish died, my life has been weary and dreary;
Sick at heart have I been, beyond the healing of friendship.
Oft in my lonely hours have I thought of the maiden Priscilla.

[133] Look up Genesis ii. 18.

She is alone in the world; her father and mother and brother
Died in the winter together; I saw her going and coming,
Now to the grave of the dead, and now to the bed of the dying,
Patient, courageous, and strong, and said to myself, that if ever
There were angels on earth, as there are angels in heaven,
Two have I seen and known; and the angel whose name is Priscilla
Holds in my desolate life the place which the other abandoned.
Long have I cherished the thought, but never have dared to reveal it,
Being a coward in this, though valiant enough for the most part.
Go to the damsel Priscilla, the loveliest maiden of Plymouth,
Say that a blunt old Captain, a man not of words but of actions,
Offers his hand and his heart, the hand and heart of a soldier.
Not in these words, you know, but this in short is my meaning;

I am a maker of war, and not a maker of phrases.
You, who are bred as a scholar, can say it in elegant language,
Such as you read in your books of the pleadings and wooings of lovers,
Such as you think best adapted to win the heart of a maiden."

When he had spoken, John Alden, the fair-haired, taciturn stripling,
All aghast at his words, surprised, embarrassed, bewildered,
Trying to mask his dismay by treating the subject with lightness,
Trying to smile, and yet feeling his heart stand still in his bosom,
Just as a timepiece stops in a house that is stricken by lightning,
Thus made answer and spake, or rather stammered than answered:
"Such a message as that, I am sure I should mangle and mar it;

152 Maker of phrases: explain what this means.

156–159 Why is Alden disturbed by the Captain's request? What would have been the wisest thing for him to do under the circumstances?

160 Timepiece stops: a belief without much foundation in fact.

If you would have it well done, — I am only repeating your maxim, —
You must do it yourself, you must not leave it to others!"
But with the air of a man whom nothing can turn from his purpose,
Gravely shaking his head, made answer the Captain of Plymouth:
"Truly the maxim is good, and I do not mean to gainsay it;
But we must use it discreetly, and not waste powder for nothing.
Now, as I said before, I was never a maker of phrases.
I can march up to a fortress and summon the place to surrender,
But march up to a woman with such a proposal, I dare not.
I'm not afraid of bullets, nor shot from the mouth of a cannon,
But of a thundering 'No!' point-blank from the mouth of a woman,
That I confess I'm afraid of, nor am I ashamed to confess it!
So you must grant my request, for you are an elegant scholar,

Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases."
Taking the hand of his friend, who still was reluctant and doubtful,
Holding it long in his own, and pressing it kindly, he added:
"Though I have spoken thus lightly, yet deep is the feeling that prompts me;
Surely you cannot refuse what I ask in the name of our friendship!"
Then made answer John Alden: "The name of friendship is sacred;
What you demand in that name, I have not the power to deny you!"
So the strong will prevailed, subduing and moulding the gentler,
Friendship prevailed over love, and Alden went on his errand.

III

THE LOVER'S ERRAND

So the strong will prevailed, and Alden went on his errand,
Out of the street of the village, and into the paths of the forest,

Into the tranquil woods, where bluebirds and robins were building
Towns in the populous trees, with hanging gardens of verdure,
Peaceful, aerial cities of joy and affection and freedom.
All around him was calm, but within him commotion and conflict,
Love contending with friendship, and self with each generous impulse.
To and fro in his breast his thoughts were heaving and dashing,
As in a foundering ship, with every roll of the vessel,
Washes the bitter sea, the merciless surge of the ocean!
"Must I relinquish it all," he cried with a wild lamentation, —

188 Populous: why are the trees so called?

Hanging gardens: the reference is to the famous Hanging Gardens of Babylon which Nebuchadnezzar built for his wife. She was a princess from Media and missed in the flat scenery of Babylon the mountains and valleys of her native land. These gardens were made in terraces supported upon columns and with soil sufficiently deep to sustain life in full-grown trees.

191 What did love prompt him to do? What did friendship urge upon him?

"Must I relinquish it all, the joy, the hope, the illusion?
Was it for this I have loved, and waited, and worshipped in silence?
Was it for this I have followed the flying feet and the shadow
Over the wintry sea, to the desolate shores of New England?
Truly the heart is deceitful, and out of its depths of corruption
Rise, like an exhalation, the misty phantoms of passion;
Angels of light they seem, but are only delusions of Satan.
All is clear to me now; I feel it, I see it distinctly!
This is the hand of the Lord; it is laid upon me in anger,
For I have followed too much the heart's desires and devices,
Worshipping Astaroth blindly, and impious idols of Baal.

198, 199 Longfellow supposes Alden's attachment to have begun in England. See the sketch of the poem in the preface.

206 Astaroth and Baal: these were Phœnician deities, Astaroth, also spelled Astarte, being about the same as the Roman Venus. Look up Judges ii. 12, 13, and I Samuel xii. 10. What Commandment was broken by such worship?

This is the cross I must bear; the sin and the swift retribution."

So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand;
Crossing the brook at the ford, where it brawled over pebble and shallow,
Gathering still, as he went, the Mayflowers blooming around him,
Fragrant, filling the air with a strange and wonderful sweetness,
Children lost in the woods, and covered with leaves in their slumber.
"Puritan flowers," he said, "and the type of Puritan maidens,
Modest and simple and sweet, the very type of Priscilla!
So I will take them to her; to Priscilla the Mayflower of Plymouth,

210 Mayflowers: the trailing arbutus. The name is applied in England to the hawthorn. It is said that the Pilgrims called the trailing arbutus thus after the hawthorn of their old home.

208, 209 These lines would seem to indicate that there were other houses in the settlement that winter than the little cluster on Leyden St. Another instance of poetic license.

212 What story is referred to?

Modest and simple and sweet, as a parting gift will I take them;
Breathing their silent farewells, as they fade and wither and perish,
Soon to be thrown away as is the heart of the giver."
So through the Plymouth woods John Alden went on his errand;
Came to an open space, and saw the disk of the ocean,
Sailless, sombre and cold with the comfortless breath of the east-wind;
Saw the new-built house, and people at work in a meadow;
Heard, as he drew near the door, the musical voice of Priscilla
Singing the hundredth Psalm, the grand old Puritan anthem,
Music that Luther sang to the sacred words of the Psalmist,
Full of the breath of the Lord, consoling and comforting many.

224 Who wrote the words of the hundredth Psalm?

225 Who was Luther? Who was the Psalmist, and why was he so called?

226 Look up Genesis ii. 7.

Then, as he opened the door, he beheld the form of the maiden
Seated beside her wheel, and the carded wool like a snow-drift
Piled at her knee, her white hands feeding the ravenous spindle,
While with her foot on the treadle she guided the wheel in its motion.
Open wide on her lap lay the well-worn psalm-book of Ainsworth,
Printed in Amsterdam, the words and the music together,
Rough-hewn, angular notes, like stones in the wall of a churchyard,
Darkened and overhung by the running vine of the verses.

228 Wheel: what sort of wheel is this? Can you give a description of it? Where did she get the wool?

229 Ravenous: why is the spindle called ravenous?

231 Ainsworth: a saintly leader and teacher among the Puritans. He was forced to remove to Holland, and there occupied his life with writings on the different books of the Bible. He died about 1622.

233, 234 A good description of a page of the hymn book. The art of printing was introduced in 1454. The use of such an art grows slowly, so that after the lapse of a century and a half the printing was still rough.

Such was the book from whose pages she sang the old Puritan anthem,
She, the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest,
Making the humble house and the modest apparel of homespun
Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her being!
Over him rushed, like a wind that is keen and cold and relentless,
Thoughts of what might have been, and the weight and woe of his errand;
All the dreams that had faded, and all the hopes that had vanished,
All his life henceforth a dreary and tenantless mansion,
Haunted by vain regrets, and pallid, sorrowful faces.
Still he said to himself, and almost fiercely he said it,
"Let not him that putteth his hand to the plough look backwards;
Though the ploughshare cut through the flowers of life to its fountains,

237, 238 Compare these lines from Herbert's "Elixir": —

"Who sweeps a room as by Thy laws
Makes that and the action fine."

245 Look up Luke ix. 62.

Though it pass o'er the graves of the dead and the hearths of the living,
It is the will of the Lord; and his mercy endureth forever!"

So he entered the house; and the hum of the wheel and the singing
Suddenly ceased; for Priscilla, aroused by his step on the threshold,
Rose as he entered and gave him her hand, in signal of welcome,
Saying, "I knew it was you, when I heard your step in the passage;
For I was thinking of you, as I sat there singing and spinning."
Awkward and dumb with delight, that a thought of him had been mingled
Thus in the sacred psalm, that came from the heart of the maiden,
Silent before her he stood, and gave her the flowers for an answer,
Finding no words for his thought. He remembered that day in the winter,
After the first great snow, when he broke a path from the village,

[247] Look up Psalm cxxxvi.

Reeling and plunging along through the drifts that encumbered the doorway,
Stamping the snow from his feet as he entered the house, and Priscilla
Laughed at his snowy locks, and gave him a seat by the fireside,
Grateful and pleased to know he had thought of her in the snowstorm.
Had he but spoken then! perhaps not in vain had he spoken;
Now it was all too late; the golden moment had vanished!
So he stood there abashed, and gave her the flowers for an answer.

Then they sat down and talked of the birds and the beautiful Springtime;
Talked of their friends at home, and the Mayflower that sailed on the morrow.
"I have been thinking all day," said gently the Puritan maiden,
"Dreaming all night, and thinking all day, of the hedge-rows of England, —

269 Hedge-rows: the hedge-rows of England are celebrated. Every visitor to England remembers them. They serve instead of fences to divide the fields, and in the spring are a tangle of running vines, and are full of blossoms.

They are in blossom now, and the country is all like a garden;
Thinking of lanes and fields, and the song of the lark and the linnet,
Seeing the village street, and familiar faces of neighbors
Going about as of old, and stopping to gossip together,
And, at the end of the street, the village church, with the ivy
Climbing the old gray tower, and the quiet graves in the churchyard.
Kind are the people I live with, and dear to me my religion;
Still my heart is so sad, that I wish myself back in Old England.
You will say it is wrong, but I cannot help it: I almost
Wish myself back in Old England, I feel so lonely and wretched."

Thereupon answered the youth: "Indeed I do not condemn you;
Stouter hearts than a woman's have quailed in this terrible winter.

270–275 A beautiful description of an English village.

Yours is tender and trusting, and needs a stronger to lean on;
So I have come to you now, with an offer and proffer of marriage
Made by a good man and true, Miles Standish the Captain of Plymouth!"

Thus he delivered his message, the dexterous writer of letters, —
Did not embellish the theme, nor array it in beautiful phrases,
But came straight to the point, and blurted it out like a school-boy;
Even the Captain himself could hardly have said it more bluntly.
Mute with amazement and sorrow, Priscilla the Puritan maiden
Looked into Alden's face, her eyes dilated with wonder,
Feeling his words like a blow, that stunned her and rendered her speechless;
Till at length she exclaimed, interrupting the ominous silence:
"If the great Captain of Plymouth is so very eager to wed me,

Why does he not come himself, and take the trouble to woo me?
If I am not worth the wooing, I surely am not worth the winning!"
Then John Alden began explaining and smoothing the matter,
Making it worse as he went, by saying the Captain was busy, —
Had no time for such things; — such things! the words grating harshly
Fell on the ear of Priscilla; and swift as a flash she made answer:
"Has he no time for such things, as you call it, before he is married,
Would he be likely to find it, or make it, after the wedding?
That is the way with you men; you don't understand us, you cannot.
When you have made up your minds, after thinking of this one and that one,
Choosing, selecting, rejecting, comparing one with another,
Then you make known your desire, with abrupt and sudden avowal,
And are offended and hurt, and indignant perhaps, that a woman

Does not respond at once to a love that she never suspected,
Does not attain at a bound the height to which you have been climbing.
This is not right nor just: for surely a woman's affection
Is not a thing to be asked for, and had for only the asking.
When one is truly in love, one not only says it, but shows it.
Had he but waited awhile, had he only showed that he loved me,
Even this Captain of yours — who knows? — at last might have won me,
Old and rough as he is; but now it never can happen."

Still John Alden went on, unheeding the words of Priscilla,
Urging the suit of his friend, explaining, persuading, expanding;
Spoke of his courage and skill, and of all his battles in Flanders,
How with the people of God he had chosen to suffer affliction,
How, in return for his zeal, they had made him Captain of Plymouth;

He was a gentleman born, could trace his pedigree plainly
Back to Hugh Standish of Duxbury Hall, in Lancashire, England,
Who was the son of Ralph, and the grandson of Thurston de Standish;
Heir unto vast estates, of which he was basely defrauded,
Still bore the family arms, and had for his crest a cock argent
Combed and wattled gules, and all the rest of the blazon.
He was a man of honor, of noble and generous nature;
Though he was rough, he was kindly; she knew how during the winter
He had attended the sick, with a hand as gentle as woman's;
Somewhat hasty and hot, he could not deny it, and headstrong,

324 Family arms: if a man belonged to a family of the nobility, or was knighted for bravery in war, he and his sons were permitted to wear upon their shields a design of some sort to distinguish them in battle. This design usually contained the head or the whole body of some animal. That of Standish was evidently a cock argent, that is, silver-colored or white, with comb and wattles gule, that is, red.

325 Blazon: the word means the description of a coat of arms.

Stern as a soldier might be, but hearty, and placable always,
Not to be laughed at and scorned, because he was little of stature;
For he was great of heart, magnanimous, courtly, courageous;
Any woman in Plymouth, nay, any woman in England,
Might be happy and proud to be called the wife of Miles Standish!

But as he warmed and glowed, in his simple and eloquent language,
Quite forgetful of self, and full of the praise of his rival,
Archly the maiden smiled, and, with eyes overrunning with laughter,
Said, in a tremulous voice, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"

IV

JOHN ALDEN

Into the open air John Alden, perplexed and bewildered,
Rushed like a man insane, and wandered alone by the sea-side;

Paced up and down the sands, and bared his head to the east-wind,
Cooling his heated brow, and the fire and fever within him.
Slowly, as out of the heavens, with apocalyptical splendors,
Sank the City of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
Glimmered the golden reed of the angel who measured the city.

"Welcome, O wind of the East!" he exclaimed in his wild exultation,
"Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty Atlantic!
Blowing o'er fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of sea-grass,
Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottos and gardens of ocean!
Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead, and wrap me

344 Look up Revelation xxi. 10–21.

349 Caves: in mythology the winds are supposed to be kept in caves.

Close in thy garments of mist, to allay the fever within me!"
Like an awakened conscience, the sea was moaning and tossing,
Beating remorseful and loud the mutable sands of the sea-shore.
Fierce in his soul was the struggle and tumult of passions contending;
Love triumphant and crowned, and friendship wounded and bleeding,
Passionate cries of desire, and importunate pleadings of duty!
"Is it my fault," he said, "that the maiden has chosen between us?
Is it my fault that he failed, — my fault that I am the victor?"
Then within him there thundered a voice, like the voice of the Prophet:
"It hath displeased the Lord!" — and he thought of David's transgression,

362 David, king of Israel, fell in love with Bathsheba, the beautiful wife of his friend Uriah. And he sent Uriah away to the war that he might be killed. Afterward the king married Bathsheba. But Nathan, the prophet, announced to David, "It hath displeased the Lord!"

What resemblance is there between this situation and that of John Alden?

Bathsheba's beautiful face, and his friend in the front of the battle!
Shame and confusion of guilt, and abasement and self-condemnation,
Overwhelmed him at once; and he cried in the deepest contrition:
"It hath displeased the Lord! It is the temptation of Satan!"

Then, uplifting his head, he looked at the sea, and beheld there
Dimly the shadowy form of the Mayflower riding at anchor,
Rocked on the rising tide, and ready to sail on the morrow;
Heard the voices of men through the mist, the rattle of cordage
Thrown on the deck, the shouts of the mate, and the sailors' "Ay, ay, Sir!"
Clear and distinct, but not loud, in the dripping air of the twilight.
Still for a moment he stood, and listened, and stared at the vessel,
Then went hurriedly on, as one who, seeing a phantom,
Stops, then quickens his pace, and follows the beckoning shadow.

"Yes, it is plain to me now," he murmured; "the hand of the Lord is
Leading me out of the land of darkness, the bondage of error,
Through the sea, that shall lift the walls of its waters around me,
Hiding me, cutting me off, from the cruel thoughts that pursue me.
Back will I go o'er the ocean, this dreary land will abandon,
Her whom I may not love, and him whom my heart has offended.
Better to be in my grave in the green old churchyard in England,
Close by my mother's side, and among the dust of my kindred;
Better be dead and forgotten, than living in shame and dishonor!
Sacred and safe and unseen, in the dark of the narrow chamber
With me my secret shall lie, like a buried jewel that glimmers
Bright on the hand that is dust, in the chambers of silence and darkness, —

376-378 Look up Exodus xiv. 21–29.

Yes, as the marriage ring of the great espousal hereafter!"

Thus as he spake, he turned, in the strength of his strong resolution,
Leaving behind him the shore, and hurried along in the twilight,
Through the congenial gloom of the forest silent and sombre,
Till he beheld the lights in the seven houses of Plymouth,
Shining like seven stars in the dusk and mist of the evening.
Soon he entered his door, and found the redoubtable Captain
Sitting alone, and absorbed in the martial pages of Cæsar,
Fighting some great campaign in Hainault or Brabant or Flanders.
"Long have you been on your errand," he said with a cheery demeanor,
Even as one who is waiting an answer, and fears not the issue.

388 The great espousal: look up Revelation xix. 7.

396 Hainault, Brabant, Flanders: all counties of the Netherlands which are now incorporated in Belgium and Holland.

"Not far off is the house, although the woods are between us;
But you have lingered so long, that while you were going and coming
I have fought ten battles and sacked and demolished a city.
Come, sit down, and in order relate to me all that has happened."

Then John Alden spake, and related the wondrous adventure
From beginning to end, minutely, just as it happened;
How he had seen Priscilla, and how he had sped in his courtship,
Only smoothing a little, and softening down her refusal.
But when he came at length to the words Priscilla had spoken,
Words so tender and cruel, "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?"
Up leaped the Captain of Plymouth, and stamped on the floor, till his armor
Clanged on the wall, where it hung, with a sound of sinister omen.
All his pent-up wrath burst forth in a sudden explosion,

E'en as a hand-grenade, that scatters destruction around it.
Wildly he shouted, and loud: "John Alden! you have betrayed me!
Me, Miles Standish, your friend! have supplanted, defrauded, betrayed me!
One of my ancestors ran his sword through the heart of Wat Tyler;
Who shall prevent me from running my own through the heart of a traitor?
Yours is the greater treason, for yours is a treason to friendship!
You, who lived under my roof, whom I cherished and loved as a brother;
You, who have fed at my board, and drunk at my cup, to whose keeping
I have intrusted my honor, my thoughts the most sacred and secret, —
You too, Brutus! ah, woe to the name of friendship hereafter!
Brutus was Cæsar's friend, and you were mine, but henceforward

415 Wat Tyler: the famous rebel in the early part of the reign of Richard II. It is stated that after Wat was struck from his horse in the presence of the king, a squire of Richard's, a "certain John Standysshe," slew him with his sword, and for this was knighted.

Let there be nothing between us save war, and implacable hatred!"

So spake the Captain of Plymouth, and strode about in the chamber,
Chafing and choking with rage; like cords were the veins on his temples.
But in the midst of his anger a man appeared at the doorway,
Bringing in uttermost haste a message of urgent importance,
Rumors of danger and war and hostile incursions of Indians!
Straightway the Captain paused, and, without further question or parley,
Took from the nail on the wall his sword with its scabbard of iron,
Buckled the belt round his waist, and, frowning fiercely, departed.
Alden was left alone. He heard the clank of the scabbard
Growing fainter and fainter, and dying away in the distance.
Then he arose from his seat, and looked forth into the darkness,

Felt the cool air blow on his cheek, that was hot with the insult,
Lifted his eyes to the heavens, and, folding his hands as in childhood,
Prayed in the silence of night to the Father who seeth in secret.

Meanwhile the choleric Captain strode wrathful away to the council,
Found it already assembled, impatiently waiting his coming;
Men in the middle of life, austere and grave in deportment,
Only one of them old, the hill that was nearest to heaven,
Covered with snow, but erect, the excellent Elder of Plymouth.
God had sifted three kingdoms to find the wheat for this planting,

437 Look up Matthew vi. 4.

442 Elder of Plymouth: this was William Brewster. The church had an Elder for teaching and another, called the ruling Elder. Brewster was the teaching Elder, that is, the pastor of the church.

443 Sifted three kingdoms: the people of the dissenting churches of England, France, and Holland had been fearfully persecuted for their religion. Only those of the utmost courage and endurance

Then had sifted the wheat, as the living seed of a nation;
So say the chronicles old, and such is the faith of the people!
Near them was standing an Indian, in attitude stern and defiant,
Naked down to the waist, and grim and ferocious in aspect;
While on the table before them was lying unopened a Bible,
Ponderous, bound in leather, brass-studded, printed in Holland,
And beside it outstretched the skin of a rattlesnake glittered,

remained true to their faith. When these refugees met in Holland, the common refuge, they formed practically one church. In Winslow's narration, page 395, it is stated: "For the truth is the Dutch and French churches, either of them being a people distinct from the world and gathered into a Holy Communion and not national churches — nay, so far from it as I verily believe the sixth person is not of the church — the difference is so small, if moderately pondered, between them and us, as we dare not for the world deny communion with them."

444 Sifted the wheat: these people were again sifted out in Holland, only the most zealous electing to go to America.

448 Bible: what did they intend to do with the Bible? The Pilgrims used the old Geneva Bible long after King James' Version was printed in 1611. What Version do we use?

Filled, like a quiver, with arrows: a signal and challenge of warfare,
Brought by the Indian, and speaking with arrowy tongues of defiance.
This Miles Standish beheld, as he entered, and heard them debating
What were an answer befitting the hostile message and menace,
Talking of this and of that, contriving, suggesting, objecting;
One voice only for peace, and that the voice of the Elder,
Judging it wise and well that some at least were converted,
Rather than any were slain, for this was but Christian behavior!
Then out spake Miles Standish, the stalwart Captain of Plymouth,
Muttering deep in his throat, for his voice was husky with anger,
"What! do you mean to make war with milk and the water of roses?
Is it to shoot red squirrels you have your howitzer planted
There on the roof of the church, or is it to shoot red devils?

Truly the only tongue that is understood by a savage
Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of the cannon!"
Thereupon answered and said the excellent elder of Plymouth,
Somewhat amazed and alarmed at this irreverent language:
"Not so thought Saint Paul, nor yet the other Apostles;
Not from the cannon's mouth were the tongues of fire they spake with!"
But unheeded fell this mild rebuke on the Captain,
Who had advanced to the table, and thus continued discoursing:
"Leave this matter to me, for to me by right it pertaineth.
War is a terrible trade; but in the cause that is righteous,
Sweet is the smell of powder; and thus I answer the challenge!"

Then from the rattlesnake's skin, with a sudden, contemptuous gesture,
Jerking the Indian arrows, he filled it with powder and bullets
Full to the very jaws, and handed it back to the savage,

Saying, in thundering tones: "Here, take it! this is your answer!"
Silently out of the room then glided the glistening savage,
Bearing the serpent's skin, and seeming himself like a serpent,
Winding his sinuous way in the dark to the depths of the forest.

V

THE SAILING OF THE MAYFLOWER

Just in the gray of the dawn, as the mists uprose from the meadows,
There was a stir and a sound in the slumbering village of Plymouth;
Clanging and clicking of arms, and the order imperative, "Forward!"
Given in tone suppressed, a tramp of feet, and then silence.
Figures ten, in the mist, marched slowly out of the village.
Standish the stalwart it was, with eight of his valorous army,

[487] Eight: there were twelve drilled men. Why did he not take the remaining four?

Led by their Indian guide, by Hobomok, friend of the white men,
Northward marching to quell the sudden revolt of the savage.
Giants they seemed in the mist, or the mighty men of King David;
Giants in heart they were, who believed in God and the Bible, —
Ay, who believed in the smiting of Midianites and Philistines.
Over them gleamed far off the crimson banners of morning;
Under them loud on the sands, the serried billows, advancing,
Fired along the line, and in regular order retreated.

Many a mile had they marched, when at length the village of Plymouth

490 Who was King David? Had he any other reputation than that of a warrior?

492 Midianites: look up Exodus ii. 15. From the Bible text, what is the probable location of this country?

Philistines: look up Exodus xiii. 17. What is the probable location of Philistia? Why did the Israelites smite the Midianites and Philistines?

493-495 Of what is this a description?

Woke from its sleep, and arose, intent on its manifold labors.
Sweet was the air and soft; and slowly the smoke from the chimneys
Rose over roofs of thatch, and pointed steadily eastward;
Men came forth from the doors, and paused and talked of the weather,
Said that the wind had changed, and was blowing fair for the Mayflower;
Talked of their Captain's departure, and all the dangers that menaced,
He being gone, the town, and what should be done in his absence.
Merrily sang the birds, and the tender voices of women
Consecrated with hymns the common cares of the household.
Out of the sea rose the sun, and the billows rejoiced at his coming;
Beautiful were his feet on the purple tops of the mountains;
Beautiful on the sails of the Mayflower riding at anchor,

501 Why is the wind said to be "blowing fair for the *Mayflower*"?
507 Look up Isaiah lii. 7.

Battered and blackened and worn by all the storms of the winter.
Loosely against her masts was hanging and flapping her canvas,
Rent by so many gales, and patched by the hands of the sailors.
Suddenly from her side, as the sun rose over the ocean,
Darted a puff of smoke, and floated seaward; anon rang
Loud over field and forest the cannon's roar, and the echoes
Heard and repeated the sound, the signal-gun of departure!
Ah! but with louder echoes replied the hearts of the people!
Meekly, in voices subdued, the chapter was read from the Bible,
Meekly the prayer was begun, but ended in fervent entreaty!
Then from their houses in haste came forth the Pilgrims of Plymouth,
Men and women and children, all hurrying down to the sea-shore,
Eager, with tearful eyes, to say farewell to the Mayflower,

Homeward bound o'er the sea, and leaving them here in the desert.

Foremost among them was Alden. All night he had lain without slumber,
Turning and tossing about in the heat and unrest of his fever.
He had beheld Miles Standish, who came back late from the council,
Stalking into the room, and heard him mutter and murmur,
Sometimes it seemed a prayer, and sometimes it sounded like swearing.
Once he had come to the bed, and stood there a moment in silence;
Then he had turned away, and said: "I will not awake him;
Let him sleep on, it is best; for what is the use of more talking!"
Then he extinguished the light, and threw himself down on his pallet,
Dressed as he was, and ready to start at the break of the morning,—

522 Desert: is Plymouth county a desert? What would be a better word? See if it will fit into the line.

Covered himself with the cloak he had worn in his campaigns in Flanders, —
Slept as a soldier sleeps in his bivouac, ready for action.
But with the dawn he arose; in the twilight Alden beheld him
Put on his corselet of steel, and all the rest of his armor,
Buckle about his waist his trusty blade of Damascus,
Take from the corner his musket, and so stride out of the chamber.
Often the heart of the youth had burned and yearned to embrace him,
Often his lips had essayed to speak, imploring for pardon;
All the old friendship came back with its tender and grateful emotions;
But his pride overmastered the nobler nature within him, —
Pride, and the sense of his wrong, and the burning fire of the insult.
So he beheld his friend departing in anger, but spake not,

534 Bivouac: a soldier often has to sleep on the field of battle wrapped only in his cloak, ready for action at a moment's notice. This is called bivouacking.

Saw him go forth to danger, perhaps to death, and he spake not!
Then he arose from his bed, and heard what the people were saying,
Joined in the talk at the door, with Stephen and Richard and Gilbert,
Joined in the morning prayer, and in the reading of Scripture,
And, with the others, in haste went hurrying down to the sea-shore,
Down to the Plymouth Rock, that had been to their feet as a doorstep
Into a world unknown, — the corner-stone of a nation!

There with his boat was the Master, already a little impatient

547 Stephen, Richard, Gilbert: these are first names of some of the colonists.

550 Plymouth Rock: the famous rock may still be seen at Plymouth. Years ago when the town felt obliged to build out a new wharf which threatened to cover the rock, an effort was made to remove the cherished landmark. The upper part was broken off and is preserved at the Museum of the Pilgrim Society. The rest of the boulder remains in its place some paces back from the water, enclosed, and surmounted with a granite canopy in which are preserved a few bones of the first settlers disinterred from the old burying lot.

551 Why is it called the corner-stone of a nation?

Lest he should lose the tide, or the wind might shift to the eastward,
Square-built, hearty, and strong, with an odor of ocean about him,
Speaking with this one and that, and cramming letters and parcels
Into his pockets capacious, and messages mingled together
Into his narrow brain, till at last he was wholly bewildered.
Nearer the boat stood Alden, with one foot placed on the gunwale,
One still firm on the rock, and talking at times with the sailors,
Seated erect on the thwarts, all ready and eager for starting.
He too was eager to go, and thus put an end to his anguish,
Thinking to fly from despair, that swifter than keel is or canvas,
Thinking to drown in the sea the ghost that would rise and pursue him.
But as he gazed on the crowd, he beheld the form of Priscilla
Standing dejected among them, unconscious of all that was passing.

Fixed were her eyes upon his, as if she divined his intention,
Fixed with a look so sad, so reproachful, imploring, and patient,
That with a sudden revulsion his heart recoiled from its purpose,
As from the verge of a crag, where one step more is destruction.
Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious instincts!
Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine!
"Here I remain!" he exclaimed, as he looked at the heavens above him,
Thanking the Lord whose breath had scattered the mist and the madness,
Wherein, blind and lost, to death he was staggering headlong.
"Yonder snow-white cloud, that floats in the ether above me,
Seems like a hand that is pointing, and beckoning over the ocean.
There is another hand, that is not so spectral and ghost-like,

Holding me, drawing me back, and clasping mine for protection.
Float, O hand of cloud, and vanish away in the ether!
Roll thyself up like a fist, to threaten and daunt me; I heed not
Either your warning or menace, or any omen of evil!
There is no land so sacred, no air so pure and so wholesome,
As is the air she breathes, and the soil that is pressed by her footsteps.
Here for her sake will I stay, and like an invisible presence
Hover around her forever, protecting, supporting her weakness;
Yes! as my foot was the first that stepped on this rock at the landing,
So, with the blessing of God, shall it be the last at the leaving!"

Meanwhile the Master alert, but with dignified air and important,
Scanning with watchful eye the tide and the wind and the weather,
Walked about on the sands, and the people crowded around him

Saying a few last words, and enforcing his careful remembrance.
Then, taking each by the hand, as if he were grasping a tiller,
Into the boat he sprang, and in haste shoved off to his vessel,
Glad in his heart to get rid of all this worry and flurry,
Glad to be gone from a land of sand and sickness and sorrow,
Short allowance of victual, and plenty of nothing but Gospel!
Lost in the sound of the oars was the last farewell of the Pilgrims.
O strong hearts and true! not one went back in the Mayflower!
No, not one looked back, who had set his hand to this ploughing!

Soon were heard on board the shouts and songs of the sailors
Heaving the windlass round, and hoisting the ponderous anchor.
Then the yards were braced, and all sails set to the west-wind,
Blowing steady and strong; and the Mayflower sailed from the harbor,

Rounded the point of the Gurnet, and leaving far to the southward
Island and cape of sand, and the Field of the First Encounter,
Took the wind on her quarter, and stood for the open Atlantic,
Borne on the send of the sea, and the swelling hearts of the Pilgrims.

Long in silence they watched the receding sail of the vessel,
Much endeared to them all, as something living and human;
Then, as if filled with the spirit, and wrapt in a vision prophetic,
Baring his hoary head, the excellent Elder of Plymouth
Said, "Let us pray!" and they prayed, and thanked the Lord and took courage.

605 Gurnet: a sandy spit of land enclosing the northern part of Plymouth Bay. It was named from a similar cape in England.

606 Island: Clark Island in Plymouth Bay.

Cape of sand: it probably means Cape Cod.

Field of the First Encounter: the place on Cape Cod where they had their first strife with the Indians. See the sketch of the Pilgrims in the preface.

611 Filled with the spirit: look up Ephesians v. 18.

Mournfully sobbed the waves at the base of the rock, and above them
Bowed and whispered the wheat on the hill of death, and their kindred
Seemed to awake in their graves, and to join in the prayer that they uttered.
Sun-illumined and white, on the eastern verge of the ocean
Gleamed the departing sail, like a marble slab in a graveyard;
Buried beneath it lay forever all hope of escaping.
Lo! as they turned to depart, they saw the form of an Indian,
Watching them from the hill; but while they spake with each other,
Pointing with outstretched hands, and saying, "Look!" he had vanished.
So they returned to their homes; but Alden lingered a little,
Musing alone on the shore, and watching the wash of the billows
Round the base of the rock, and the sparkle and flash of the sunshine,
Like the spirit of God, moving visibly over the waters.

626 Spirit of God: look up Genesis i. 2.

VI

PRISCILLA

Thus for a while he stood, and mused by the shore of the ocean,
Thinking of many things, and most of all of Priscilla;
And as if thought had the power to draw to itself, like the loadstone,
Whatsoever it touches, by subtile laws of its nature,
Lo! as he turned to depart, Priscilla was standing beside him.

"Are you so much offended, you will not speak to me?" said she.
"Am I so much to blame, that yesterday, when you were pleading

629 Loadstone: sometimes spelled lodestone, and also called a magnet. It is a piece of iron ore which is capable of attracting other pieces of iron. It was put to its most famous use after it was learned that a needle made of it and suspended so that it could move freely, pointed steadily to the north. From this was constructed the mariner's compass, by the use of which sailors may direct the course of their ship out of sight of land. Thus the modern art of navigation was made possible.

Warmly the cause of another, my heart, impulsive and wayward,
Pleaded your own, and spake out, forgetful perhaps of decorum?
Certainly you can forgive me for speaking so frankly, for saying
What I ought not to have said, yet now I can never unsay it;
For there are moments in life, when the heart is so full of emotion,
That if by chance it be shaken, or into its depths like a pebble
Drops some careless word, it overflows, and its secret,
Spilt on the ground like water, can never be gathered together.
Yesterday I was shocked, when I heard you speak of Miles Standish,
Praising his virtues, transforming his very defects into virtues,
Praising his courage and strength, and even his fighting in Flanders,
As if by fighting alone you could win the heart of a woman,

641 Spilt on the ground like water: look up II Samuel xiv. 14.

Quite overlooking yourself and the rest, in exalting your hero.
Therefore I spake as I did, by an irresistible impulse.
You will forgive me, I hope, for the sake of the friendship between us,
Which is too true and too sacred to be so easily broken!"
Thereupon answered John Alden, the scholar, the friend of Miles Standish:
"I was not angry with you, with myself alone I was angry,
Seeing how badly I managed the matter I had in my keeping."
"No!" interrupted the maiden, with answer prompt and decisive;
"No; you were angry with me, for speaking so frankly and freely.
It was wrong, I acknowledge; for it is the fate of a woman
Long to be patient and silent, to wait like a ghost that is speechless,
Till some questioning voice dissolves the spell of its silence.

656-657 The tradition is that a ghost cannot address any one until it is spoken to.

Hence is the inner life of so many suffering women
Sunless and silent and deep, like subterranean rivers
Running through caverns of darkness, unheard, unseen, and unfruitful,
Chafing their channels of stone, with endless and profitless murmurs."
Thereupon answered John Alden, the young man, the lover of women:
"Heaven forbid it, Priscilla; and truly they seem to me always
More like the beautiful rivers that watered the garden of Eden,
More like the river Euphrates, through deserts of Havilah flowing,
Filling the land with delight, and memories sweet of the garden!"
"Ah, by these words, I can see," again interrupted the maiden,

664 Rivers of Eden: look up Genesis ii. 10–14. From these rivers, where is the Garden of Eden supposed to have been located?

665 Havilah: names are often duplicated in Bible history. For instance, there are two Æthiopias, one lying about the southern portion of the Caspian Sea and one in Africa. So, too, there was one Havilah directly east of Egypt on the coast of the Mediterranean, and another, as the text shows, along the course of the Euphrates River.

"How very little you prize me, or care for what I am saying.
When from the depths of my heart, in pain and with secret misgiving,
Frankly I speak to you, asking for sympathy only and kindness,
Straightway you take up my words, that are plain and direct and in earnest,
Turn them away from their meaning, and answer with flattering phrases.
This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in you;
For I know and esteem you, and feel that your nature is noble,
Lifting mine up to a higher, a more ethereal level.
Therefore I value your friendship, and feel it perhaps the more keenly
If you say aught that implies I am only as one among many,
If you make use of those common and complimentary phrases
Most men think so fine, in dealing and speaking with women,
But which women reject as insipid, if not as insulting."

Mute and amazed was Alden; and listened and looked at Priscilla,
Thinking he never had seen her more fair, more divine in her beauty.
He who but yesterday pleaded so glibly the cause of another,
Stood there embarrassed and silent, and seeking in vain for an answer.
So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined
What was at work in his heart, that made him so awkward and speechless.
"Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things
Keep ourselves loyal to truth, and the sacred professions of friendship.
It is no secret I tell you, nor am I ashamed to declare it:
I have liked to be with you, to see you, to speak with you always.
So I was hurt at your words, and a little affronted to hear you
Urge me to marry your friend, though he were the Captain Miles Standish.
For I must tell you the truth: much more to me is your friendship

Than all the love he could give, were he twice the hero you think him."
Then she extended her hand, and Alden, who eagerly grasped it,
Felt all the wounds in his heart, that were aching and bleeding so sorely,
Healed by the touch of that hand, and he said, with a voice full of feeling:
"Yes, we must ever be friends; and of all who offer you friendship
Let me be ever the first, the truest, the nearest and dearest!"

Casting a farewell look at the glimmering sail of the Mayflower
Distant, but still in sight, and sinking below the horizon,
Homeward together they walked, with a strange, indefinite feeling,
That all the rest had departed and left them alone in the desert.
But, as they went through the fields in the blessing and smile of the sunshine,
Lighter grew their hearts, and Priscilla said very archly:
"Now that our terrible Captain has gone in pursuit of the Indians,

Where he is happier far than he would be commanding a household,
You may speak boldly, and tell me of all that happened between you,
When you returned last night, and said how ungrateful you found me."
Thereupon answered John Alden, and told her the whole of the story, —
Told her his own despair, and the direful wrath of Miles Standish.
Whereat the maiden smiled, and said between laughing and earnest,
"He is a little chimney, and heated hot in a moment!"
But as he gently rebuked her, and told her how he had suffered, —
How he had even determined to sail that day in the Mayflower,
And had remained for her sake, on hearing the dangers that threatened, —
All her manner was changed, and she said with a faltering accent,
"Truly I thank you for this: how good you have been to me always!"

Thus, as a pilgrim devout, who toward Jerusalem journeys,

Taking three steps in advance, and one reluctantly backward,
Urged by importunate zeal, and withheld by pangs of contrition;
Slowly but steadily onward, receding yet ever advancing,
Journeyed this Puritan youth to the Holy Land of his longings,
Urged by the fervor of love, and withheld by remorseful misgivings.

VII

THE MARCH OF MILES STANDISH

Meanwhile the stalwart Miles Standish was marching steadily northward,

719–724 Give in your own words the meaning of this paragraph.

723 Holy Land: what is its geographical name? Where is it? Why was it called the Holy Land?

725 Northward: this was an expedition against the Indians which Miles Standish undertook in 1623 instead of 1621. But it suits the story better to bring it in here. A friend of the Pilgrims in London, a Mr. Weston, had sent out a colony of his own which settled at about the present location of Weymouth. This colony was not composed of very sensible men, and they were faring badly at the hands of their Indian neighbors. Out of friendship for the founder of the colony, the Pilgrims sent Standish and his little band to their assistance. Eventually, a few of Weston's men joined the Pilgrims, and the rest found their way back to England.

Winding through forest and swamp, and along the trend of the sea-shore,
All day long, with hardly a halt, the fire of his anger
Burning and crackling within, and the sulphurous odor of powder
Seeming more sweet to his nostrils than all the scents of the forest.
Silent and moody he went, and much he revolved his discomfort;
He who was used to success, and to easy victories always,
Thus to be flouted, rejected, and laughed to scorn by a maiden,
Thus to be mocked and betrayed by the friend whom most he had trusted!
Ah! 'twas too much to be borne, and he fretted and chafed in his armor!

"I alone am to blame," he muttered, "for mine was the folly.
What has a rough old soldier, grown grim and gray in the harness,
Used to the camp and its ways, to do with the wooing of maidens?
'Twas but a dream, — let it pass, — let it vanish like so many others!

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is worthless;
Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away, and henceforward
Be but a fighter of battles, a lover and wooer of dangers."
Thus he revolved in his mind his sorry defeat and discomfort,
While he was marching by day or lying at night in the forest,
Looking up at the trees and the constellations beyond them.

After a three days' march he came to an Indian encampment
Pitched on the edge of a meadow, between the sea and the forest;
Women at work by the tents, and warriors, horrid with war-paint,
Seated about a fire, and smoking and talking together;
Who, when they saw from afar the sudden approach of the white men,

748 Who was the Englishman credited with taking this custom to England?

Saw the flash of the sun on breastplate and sabre and musket,
Straightway leaped to their feet, and two, from among them advancing,
Came to parley with Standish, and offer him furs as a present:
Friendship was in their looks, but in their hearts there was hatred.
Braves of the tribe were these, and brothers, gigantic in stature,
Huge as Goliath of Gath, or the terrible Og, king of Bashan;
One was Pecksuot named, and the other was called Wattawamat.

752 Furs: from time immemorial, furs have been one of the choicest articles of commerce, vying in value with gold and gems. Kings and emperors have desired them for gifts and costly court garments. Make out as long a list as you can of the animals whose fur is valuable, and tell which of these are found in America. Where do Americans get seals? Name a people in America whose clothing consists mainly of furs. Siberia is valued by Russia for its fur-bearing animals; the fur trade caused France to settle Canada, and was concerned in the settlement of New England, New York, and Virginia. Name a port on the west coast of the United States which was founded expressly for the fur trade. What great fur-trading company do the British maintain in British America?

755 Goliath of Gath: look up I Samuel xvii. 4–7. Og, king of Bashan: look up Deuteronomy iii. 1 and 11.

756 Pronounce the Indian names by scanning the line.

Round their necks were suspended their knives in scabbards of wampum,
Two-edged, trenchant knives, with points as sharp as a needle.
Other arms had they none, for they were cunning and crafty.
"Welcome, English!" they said, — these words they had learned from the traders
Touching at times on the coast, to barter and chaffer for peltries.
Then in their native tongue they began to parley with Standish,
Through his guide and interpreter, Hobomok, friend of the white man,
Begging for blankets and knives, but mostly for muskets and powder,
Kept by the white man, they said, concealed, with the plague, in his cellars,
Ready to be let loose, and destroy his brother the red man!

760 Traders: these would either come down the coast from the fishing at Monhegan on the Maine coast, or up from the Virginia colony.

765, 766 Plague: Squanto, the Indian friendly to the Pilgrims, had sought to increase his importance among the neighboring tribes by telling them that the Pilgrims kept the plague in their cellars, and that he could get them to send it out if he chose.

But when Standish refused, and said he would give them the Bible,
Suddenly changing their tone, they began to boast and to bluster.
Then Wattawamat advanced with a stride in front of the other,
And, with a lofty demeanor, thus vauntingly spake to the Captain:
"Now Wattawamat can see, by the fiery eyes of the Captain,
Angry is he in his heart; but the heart of the brave Wattawamat
Is not afraid at the sight. He was not born of a woman,
But on a mountain, at night, from an oak-tree riven by lightning,
Forth he sprang at a bound, with all his weapons about him,
Shouting, 'Who is there here to fight with the brave Wattawamat?'"
Then he unsheathed his knife, and, whetting the blade on his left hand,
Held it aloft and displayed a woman's face on the handle,
Saying, with bitter expression and look of sinister meaning:

"I have another at home, with the face of a man on the handle;
By and by they shall marry; and there will be plenty of children!"

Then stood Pecksuot forth, self-vaunting, insulting Miles Standish;
While with his fingers he patted the knife that hung at his bosom,
Drawing it half from its sheath, and plunging it back, as he muttered,
"By and by it shall see; it shall eat; ah, ha! but shall speak not!
This is the mighty Captain the white men have sent to destroy us!
He is a little man; let him go and work with the women!"

Meanwhile Standish had noted the faces and figures of Indians

787 The Indian braves were generally large of stature. Standish was short. They considered women inferior. Furthermore, they did no work except perhaps to pick the leaves of the tobacco. All the planting and hoeing of the corn, the grinding of the meal, the cooking, and the carrying of burdens were done by the women. So there is a triple insult intended by the speech of Pecksuot; that is, that the Captain was little, that he was no better than a woman, and that he might go and work.

Peeping and creeping about from bush to tree in the forest,
Feigning to look for game, with arrows set on their bow-strings,
Drawing about him still closer and closer the net of their ambush.
But undaunted he stood, and dissembled and treated them smoothly;
So the old chronicles say, that were writ in the days of the fathers.
But when he heard their defiance, the boast, the taunt and the insult,
All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston de Standish,
Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his temples.
Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and, snatching his knife from its scabbard,
Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage
Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness upon it.
Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the war-whoop,
And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,

Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.
Then came a cloud of smoke, and out of the cloud came the lightning,
Out of the lightning thunder; and death unseen ran before it.
Frightened the savages fled for shelter in swamp and in thicket,
Hotly pursued and beset; but their sachem, the brave Wattawamat,
Fled not; he was dead. Unswerving and swift had a bullet
Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands clutching the greensward,
Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his fathers.

There on the flowers of the meadow the warriors lay, and above them,
Silent, with folded arms, stood Hobomok, friend of the white man.

803, 804 What is the meaning of these lines? This was the only actual battle which the Pilgrims fought with the Indians for over half a century.

809 It is possible that even at this early day the Indians had decided that the white men were come to deprive them of their land. It became their fixed idea in later times.

Smiling at length he exclaimed to the stalwart Captain of Plymouth:
"Pecksuot bragged very loud, of his courage, his strength and his stature, —
Mocked the great Captain, and called him a little man; but I see now
Big enough have you been to lay him speechless before you!"

Thus the first battle was fought and won by the stalwart Miles Standish.
When the tidings thereof were brought to the village of Plymouth,
And as a trophy of war the head of the brave Wattawamat
Scowled from the roof of the fort, which at once was a church and a fortress,
All who beheld it rejoiced, and praised the Lord, and took courage.

818, 819 Trophy of war: this would be thought a horrible thing to do now, but the English people were then so used to it that it did not shock them. Much later than this, in 1660, when Charles II was restored to the throne, the body of the great Cromwell was torn out of its grave and hung on a gibbet.

Only Priscilla averted her face from this spectre of terror,
Thanking God in her heart that she had not married Miles Standish;
Shrinking, fearing almost, lest, coming home from his battles,
He should lay claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of his valor.

VIII

THE SPINNING-WHEEL

Month after month passed away, and in autumn the ships of the merchants
Came with kindred and friends, with cattle and corn for the Pilgrims.

825 Ships: the *Anne* and the *Little James* which really came in 1623.

826 Cattle: no cattle came to the colony till 1624, though the Pilgrims had dogs, swine, and poultry. It was necessary that cattle should be brought as soon as possible. The lack of domestic animals was one reason why the Indians did not attain to a higher civilization. How did the original inhabitants of America happen to be called Indians? How do you suppose they came to be in America? Look at the map and see if they could have come from Asia? How do domestic animals help to civilize?

Corn: this must mean wheat or oats, etc. They would not be likely to obtain Indian corn from England. Before the discovery of America, the word "corn" meant any kind of grain.

All in the village was peace; the men were intent on their labors,
Busy with hewing and building, with garden-plot and with merestead,
Busy with breaking the glebe, and mowing the grass in the meadows,
Searching the sea for its fish, and hunting the deer in the forest.
All in the village was peace; but at times the rumor of warfare
Filled the air with alarm, and the apprehension of danger.
Bravely the stalwart Standish was scouring the land with his forces,
Waxing valiant in fight and defeating the alien armies,
Till his name had become a sound of fear to the nations.
Anger was still in his heart, but at times the remorse and contrition
Which in all noble natures succeed the passionate outbreak,
Came like a rising tide, that encounters the rush of a river,

835 Nations: name two great Indian nations which at that time held the eastern part of America.

Staying its current awhile, but making it bitter and brackish.

Meanwhile Alden at home had built him a new habitation,
Solid, substantial, of timber rough-hewn from the firs of the forest.
Wooden-barred was the door, and the roof was covered with rushes;
Latticed the windows were, and the window-panes were of paper,
Oiled to admit the light, while wind and rain were excluded.
There too he dug a well, and around it planted an orchard:

838, 839 Such rivers are called tide-rivers. The Saint Lawrence is a tide-river up above Quebec.

843 Describe lattice windows.

Window-panes: the art of making window glass was known in England long before that, but it came into use very slowly, and glass windows were considered a great luxury which only the very rich could afford. Usually the lattice framework of windows was filled with paper which was treated with linseed oil. This allowed the light to shine through, but prevented the rain from soaking the paper.

Still may be seen to this day some trace of the well and the orchard.
Close to the house was the stall, where, safe and secure from annoyance,
Raghorn, the snow-white bull, that had fallen to Alden's allotment
In the division of cattle, might ruminate in the night-time
Over the pastures he cropped, made fragrant by sweet pennyroyal.

Oft when his labor was finished, with eager feet would the dreamer
Follow the pathway that ran through the woods to the house of Priscilla,
Led by illusions romantic and subtile deceptions of fancy,
Pleasure disguised as duty, and love in the semblance of friendship.
Ever of her he thought, when he fashioned the walls of his dwelling;
Ever of her he thought, when he delved in the soil of his garden;

846 The descendants of John Alden still own his old homestead in Duxbury, a neighboring town to Plymouth. The present house is supposed to occupy the site of the first one.

Ever of her he thought, when he read in his Bible on Sunday
Praise of the virtuous woman, as she is described in the Proverbs, —
How the heart of her husband doth safely trust in her always,
How all the days of her life she will do him good, and not evil,
How she seeketh the wool and the flax and worketh with gladness,
How she layeth her hand to the spindle and holdeth the distaff,
How she is not afraid of the snow for herself or her household,
Knowing her household are clothed with the scarlet cloth of her weaving!

So as she sat at her wheel one afternoon in the Autumn,
Alden, who opposite sat, and was watching her dexterous fingers,
As if the thread she was spinning were that of his life and his fortune,

858 Look up Proverbs xxxi. 10–28.

867 Thread: the old legend was that the three Fates spun out the thread of each one's life and cut it off where they pleased. A very

After a pause in their talk, thus spake to the sound of the spindle.

"Truly, Priscilla," he said, "when I see you spinning and spinning,

Never idle a moment, but thrifty and thoughtful of others,

Suddenly you are transformed, are visibly changed in a moment;

You are no longer Priscilla, but Bertha the Beautiful Spinner."

Here the light foot on the treadle grew swifter and swifter; the spindle

Uttered an angry snarl, and the thread snapped short in her fingers;

While the impetuous speaker, not heeding the mischief, continued:

"You are the beautiful Bertha, the spinner, the queen of Helvetia;

She whose story I read at a stall in the streets of Southampton,

famous picture represents the three Fates, Clótho spinning, Láchesis drawing out the thread, and Átropos cutting it off.

876 Helvetia: southern Burgundy, which used to include a part of Switzerland. Bertha was the wife of Rudolph II of Burgundy, and was famous for her domestic virtues. On the monuments of the time she is represented spinning.

877 Southampton: locate on the map.

Who, as she rode on her palfrey, o'er valley and meadow and mountain,
Ever was spinning her thread from a distaff fixed to her saddle.
She was so thrifty and good, that her name passed into a proverb.
So shall it be with your own, when the spinning-wheel shall no longer
Hum in the house of the farmer, and fill its chambers with music.
Then shall the mothers, reproving, relate how it was in their childhood,
Praising the good old times, and the days of Priscilla the spinner!"
Straight uprose from her wheel the beautiful Puritan maiden,

879 Spinning: the primitive method of spinning, which may be seen to-day in Greece, as Homer described it, is as follows: a bunch of wool is stuck on a short staff called the distaff. Then there is a small rod or stick with a notch in it and slightly weighted. A tuft of wool is fastened in this notch, and the weight of the stick or spindle hanging down serves to draw out the tuft so that the fingers by running up and down it can twist it into a uniform thread of yarn. When the thread becomes too long, it is wound up on the spindle and the process continues.

881-884 The inventions which took spinning out of the homes into the factories were patented from 1770–1775. Would John Alden have been likely to make such a prophecy?

Pleased with the praise of her thrift from him whose praise was the sweetest,
Drew from the reel on the table a snowy skein of her spinning,
Thus making answer, meanwhile, to the flattering phrases of Alden:
"Come, you must not be idle; if I am a pattern for housewives,
Show yourself equally worthy of being the model of husbands.
Hold this skein on your hands, while I wind it, ready for knitting;
Then who knows but hereafter, when fashions have changed and the manners,
Fathers may talk to their sons of the good old times of John Alden!"
Thus, with a jest and a laugh, the skein on his hands she adjusted,
He sitting awkwardly there, with his arms extended before him,
She standing graceful, erect, and winding the thread from his fingers,
Sometimes chiding a little his clumsy manner of holding,
Sometimes touching his hands, as she disentangled expertly

Twist or knot in the yarn, unawares — for how could she help it? —
Sending electrical thrills through every nerve in his body.

Lo! in the midst of this scene, a breathless messenger entered,
Bringing in hurry and heat the terrible news from the village.
Yes; Miles Standish was dead! — an Indian had brought them the tidings, —
Slain by a poisoned arrow, shot down in the front of the battle,
Into an ambush beguiled, cut off with the whole of his forces;
All the town would be burned, and all the people be murdered!
Such were the tidings of evil that burst on the hearts of the hearers.
Silent and statue-like stood Priscilla, her face looking backward
Still at the face of the speaker, her arms uplifted in horror;
But John Alden, upstarting, as if the barb of the arrow

Piercing the heart of his friend had struck his own, and had sundered
Once and forever the bonds that held him bound as a captive,
Wild with excess of sensation, the awful delight of his freedom,
Mingled with pain and regret, unconscious of what he was doing,
Clasped, almost with a groan, the motionless form of Priscilla,
Pressing her close to his heart, as forever his own, and exclaiming:
"Those whom the Lord hath united, let no man put them asunder!"

Even as rivulets twain, from distant and separate sources,
Seeing each other afar, as they leap from the rocks, and pursuing
Each one its devious path, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rush together at last, at their trysting-place in the forest;
So these lives that had run thus far in separate channels,

911-915 Explain in your own words these sensations of John Alden.
917 Look up Mark x. 6–9.

Coming in sight of each other, then swerving and flowing asunder,
Parted by barriers strong, but drawing nearer and nearer,
Rushed together at last, and one was lost in the other.

IX

THE WEDDING-DAY

Forth from the curtain of clouds, from the tent of purple and scarlet,
Issued the sun, the great High-Priest, in his garments resplendent,
Holiness unto the Lord, in letters of light, on his forehead,
Round the hem of his robe the golden bells and pomegranates.
Blessing the world he came, and the bars of vapor beneath him
Gleamed like a grate of brass, and the sea at his feet was a laver!

924 What were the "barriers strong"?

927–929 For a partial description of the garments of a Jewish High-Priest, look up Exodus xxviii. 31–38.

931 Laver: look up Exodus xxx. 17–19.

This was the wedding morn of Priscilla the Puritan maiden.
Friends were assembled together; the Elder and Magistrate also
Graced the scene with their presence, and stood like the Law and the Gospel,
One with the sanction of earth and one with the blessing of heaven.
Simple and brief was the wedding as that of Ruth and of Boaz.
Softly the youth and the maiden repeated the words of betrothal,
Taking each other for husband and wife in the Magistrate's presence,
After the Puritan way, and the laudable custom of Holland.
Fervently then and devoutly, the excellent Elder of Plymouth

932 Wedding morn: this was probably the second marriage which took place in the colony.

934 Law and the Gospel: are both represented in a marriage ceremony of to-day? Which is represented by the marriage license? By the marriage certificate? Why must the law be represented? Why the Gospel? (See reference on line 917.)

936 You will find the story of Ruth in Ruth i. 1–8 and 16–18, ii. 1–2 and 15–16. Boaz, her kinsman, was quickly charmed with Ruth and made her his wife.

Prayed for the hearth and the home, that were founded that day in affection,
Speaking of life and of death, and imploring Divine benedictions.

Lo! when the service was ended, a form appeared on the threshold,
Clad in armor of steel, a sombre and sorrowful figure!
Why does the bridegroom start and stare at the strange apparition?
Why does the bride turn pale, and hide her face on his shoulder?
Is it a phantom of air, — a bodiless, spectral illusion?
Is it a ghost from the grave, that has come to forbid the betrothal?
Long had it stood there unseen, a guest uninvited, unwelcomed;
Over its clouded eyes there had passed at times an expression

941, 942 It is evident that the magistrate performed what we call the wedding ceremony and the minister offered the prayer afterward. With us to-day, the magistrate is not usually present, the minister having charge of the whole ceremony. Are marriages ever performed without the minister?

Softening the gloom and revealing the warm heart hidden beneath them,
As when across the sky the driving rack of the rain cloud
Grows for a moment thin, and betrays the sun by its brightness.
Once it had lifted its hand, and moved its lips, but was silent,
As if an iron will had mastered the fleeting intention
But when were ended the troth and the prayer and the last benediction,
Into the room it strode, and the people beheld with amazement
Bodily there in his armor Miles Standish, the Captain of Plymouth!
Grasping the bridegroom's hand, he said with emotion, "Forgive me!
I have been angry and hurt, — too long have I cherished the feeling;
I have been cruel and hard, but now, thank God! it is ended.
Mine is the same hot blood that leaped in the veins of Hugh Standish,

955 What was probably the "fleeting intention"? (See line 948 of the text.)

Sensitive, swift to resent, but as swift in atoning for error.
Never so much as now was Miles Standish the friend of John Alden."
Thereupon answered the bridegroom: "Let all be forgotten between us, —
All save the dear old friendship, and that shall grow older and dearer!"
Then the Captain advanced, and, bowing, saluted Priscilla,
Gravely, and after the manner of old-fashioned gentry in England,
Something of camp and of court, of town and of country, commingled,
Wishing her joy of her wedding, and loudly lauding her husband.
Then he said with a smile: "I should have remembered the adage, —
If you would be well served, you must serve yourself; and moreover,
No man can gather cherries in Kent at the season of Christmas!"

Great was the people's amazement, and greater yet their rejoicing.

973 Give in your own words the meaning of the adage as applied to this situation. Where is Kent?

Thus to behold once more the sunburnt face of their Captain,
Whom they had mourned as dead; and they gathered and crowded about him,
Eager to see him and hear him, forgetful of bride and of bridegroom,
Questioning, answering, laughing, and each interrupting the other,
Till the good Captain declared, being quite overpowered and bewildered,
He had rather by far break into an Indian encampment,
Than come again to a wedding to which he had not been invited.

Meanwhile the bridegroom went forth and stood with the bride at the doorway,
Breathing the perfumed air of that warm and beautiful morning.
Touched with autumnal tints, but lonely and sad in the sunshine,
Lay extended before them the land of toil and privation;
There were the graves of the dead, and the barren waste of the sea-shore,
There the familiar fields, the groves of pine, and the meadows;

But to their eyes transfigured, it seemed as the Garden of Eden,
Filled with the presence of God, whose voice was the sound of the ocean.

Soon was their vision disturbed by the noise and stir of departure,
Friends coming forth from the house, and impatient of longer delaying,
Each with his plan for the day, and the work that was left uncompleted.
Then from a stall near at hand, amid exclamations of wonder,
Alden the thoughtful, the careful, so happy, so proud of Priscilla,
Brought out his snow-white bull, obeying the hand of its master,
Led by a cord that was tied to an iron ring in its nostrils,
Covered with crimson cloth, and a cushion placed for a saddle.
She should not walk, he said, through the dust and heat of the noonday;
Nay, she should ride like a queen, not plod along like a peasant.
Somewhat alarmed at first, but reassured by the others,

Placing her hand on the cushion, her foot in the hand of her husband,
Gayly, with joyous laugh, Priscilla mounted her palfrey.
"Nothing is wanting now," he said with a smile, "but the distaff;
Then you would be in truth my queen, my beautiful Bertha!"

Onward the bridal procession now moved to their new habitation,
Happy husband and wife, and friends conversing together.
Pleasantly murmured the brook, as they crossed the ford in the forest,
Pleased with the image that passed, like a dream of love from its bosom,
Tremulous-floating in air, o'er the depths of the azure abysses.
Down through the golden leaves the sun was pouring his splendors,
Gleaming on purple grapes, that, from branches above them suspended,
Mingled their odorous breath with the balm of the pine and the fir-tree,

Wild and sweet as the clusters that grew in the valley of Eschol.
Like a picture it seemed of the primitive, pastoral ages,
Fresh with the youth of the world, and recalling Rebecca and Isaac,
Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,
Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.
So through the Plymouth woods passed onward the bridal procession.

1013 Eschol: look up Numbers xiii. 23 and 24.

1015 Find the story in Genesis xxiv.

It will perhaps be pleasant to know that Captain Miles Standish was not permanently saddened by Priscilla's refusal of him. In the *Anne*, which arrived at Plymouth in August of 1623, there came a maiden by the name of Barbara, whom the doughty Captain wooed and won. Thereupon he built himself a home at a short distance from Plymouth and called the region Duxbury, after one of the ancestral homes of his family. There at the foot of Captain's Hill he lived for the rest of his life. He left six children who have numerous descendants. The tall shaft erected on Captain's Hill to his memory is a prominent object in the landscape for miles around.

There is a fitting monument erected to the Pilgrims at Plymouth.

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